

REMARKS

Careful consideration has been given by the applicants to the Examiner's comments and rejection of various of the claims, as set forth in the outstanding Office Action, and favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application, as amended, is earnestly solicited.

Applicants gratefully note the Examiner's indication that at least Claims 5-8, 10-15, 17, 22-25, 27-32 and 34 are considered to be directed to allowable subject matter and would be allowed if either rewritten in independent form or made dependent from an allowable main claim.

Concerning the foregoing, applicants also note the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 4, 16, 18, 20, 21 and 33, and also Claims 9 and 26, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over Addeo, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,335,011 in view of Durlach, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,828,997, as detailed in the Office Action.

Furthermore, applicants note the rejection of Claims 2 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over the art applied to Claims 1 and 18, further in view of Abe, et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,323,257, as also detailed in the Office Action.

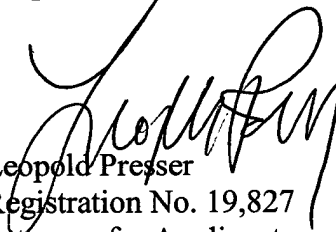
Upon careful consideration of the art, and in order to place the present application into order for allowance, applicants have cancelled Claims 4 and 5 without prejudice and incorporated the limitations thereof into Claim 1, with the remaining apparatus claims being dependent therefrom.

Furthermore, with regard to the method claims, applicants have incorporated Claims 21 and 22 into independent Claim 18, and with the remaining method claims being dependent therefrom either directly or indirectly.

Inasmuch as the claims have been amended whereby Claims 1 and 18 incorporate the allowable Claim 5 and 22, respectively, including any intervening claims, all of the claims are deemed to be in condition for allowance and clearly and patentably distinguish over the prior art, irrespective as whether the latter is considered singly or in combination.

Accordingly, the early issuance of the Notice of Allowance by the Examiner is earnestly solicited. However, in the event that the Examiner has any queries concerning the instantly submitted Amendment, applicants' attorney respectfully requests that he be accorded the courtesy of possibly a telephone conference to discuss any matters in need of attention.

Respectfully submitted,



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